

AGE OF PROGRESS

The development of Spiritual Truth is the achievement of human freedom.

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WHOLE No. 1

The Personality of God.

We have an indistinct recollection of saying, in some of our editorial articles, that Spiritualists do not pretend to comprehend God. To this we will now add, that if they did pretend to comprehend God, in his fulness, they would thereby verify what has been so frequently said of them by their traducers; to wit: that they are monomaniacs, if not insane.

Notwithstanding that this is our position, we conceive it to be the duty of all God's children to try to comprehend as much of their heavenly Father as they can possibly grasp and gather into the intellectual and spiritual capacities with which he has endowed them. And we are fully convinced that it is the will of that Father that his children shall all study him diligently, and find out as much of him as they can, from the time they commence the exercise of their reasoning powers, through the circles of eternal ages. Nor need any superficial objector throw Pope at us, with his true philosophy—as far as it goes:

"The proper study of mankind is man."

When that greatest of philosophical poets uttered that sentiment, he did that which was tantamount to saying: The proper study of mankind is God. If man be an epitome of universal nature, as philosophy represents him to be, he is an epitome of God. Hence, while man is studying man, he is studying God epitomised, or God in embryo, as man is sometimes philosophically designated.

Zophar asked of Job, tauntingly, "Canst thou, by searching, find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" To the first of these questions, the proper answer is: Yes, we can find him out continually. To the second, the appropriate reply is: Never! Then we cannot set about the labor of finding him out too soon. Nor need we fear that we shall weary in it, for we shall be so intensely interested, so absorbed and elevated, by the continual developments which will open to us, that the labor itself will be the most invigorating rest of the soul.

Every lesson which we learn, in the book of nature, is so much toward comprehending God. When we learn that the germ of the oak is in the acorn, we find out one of the mysteries of God which we did not know before. When we learn that the acorn will swell, germinate and send forth the infant tree, when it is buried in the bosom of the earth, we discover another of those secrets of nature, which are the true "mysteries Godliness." And it is our privilege to go deeper and still deeper into the arcana of natural science, and find out, if we can, how the forces of nature operate upon that, and all other seeds, which are committed to the earth's bosom for reproduction; and as fast as we discover in what manner the electric and magnetic forces, which permeate the soil, are brought to bear upon the soil, the water which is mingled with it, the atmospheric air which occupies all its interstices, and the planted seed, so fast we shall be finding out more and more of God, in that department of nature.

When we see an insect light upon a green leaf and seem to kiss

its enamelled surface, we may learn something of God, if we choose to take note of the act. Examine the leaf closely, and we shall find its surface punctured with the insects ovipositor. Return to it after a short interval of time, and a blister will be found where the puncture was made. Return again, after another interval, and the blister will be embrowned and show signs of opening apertures or cracks. Break it open, and it will be found full of larvæ, or infant insects, with their wings unfolding, soon to be ready to join the infinite millions that swarm in the air, and subsist, for the brief hour of their existence, upon the bounties of nature. And if we cannot, whilst viewing and contemplating these countless tribes of winged nothings, perceive what God's motive could have been for producing such seemingly useless beings, let us endeavor, by the aid of analogy, to enter into their cogitations, and we shall find them as much at a loss to discover why God made such huge animals as we are, in whose every footstep and motion, they find nothing but destruction to themselves and their kindred tribes. At every foot-fall of man, a troop of living creatures die; and every breath which he draws, is a Maelstrom of destruction to myriads of ephemera, whose birth place and whose home for their moment of life, is the atmospheric ocean. And it would be folly to doubt that, when we learn more of God, by the study which Pope recommends, we shall find that these ephemera which our lungs drink in so copiously, are vitally necessary to us, in the season which produces them.

Rising from the infinite minutia of animated nature, the contemplation of which, in the endlessly descending scale of being, makes the mind stagger with the giddiness of discomfited comprehension, we look into ourselves, where we find a structure which excites still greater astonishment, because its frame-work, its complicated machinery, its muscular, vascular and nervous systems, and all its ligaments, filaments, integuments, tissues and coverings, are so developed as to render them palpable to our touch and discernable to our vision. We find ourselves each to constitute a locomotive machine, endowed with the principle of perpetual, or self-producing motion. In its interior there is an engine, the power of which supplies it with fuel, and keeps all parts of the machine in motion. It is crowned with a dome wherein there is a laboratory in which thoughts are generated by a spirit which pervades the whole. The spirit, by means of the thoughts which it elaborates, governs the entire structure, and directs all its motions. So wonderful a piece of mechanism is the human structure, that no one can contemplate it in all its parts and operations, without arriving at the conclusion, that its inventor and builder must possess power, knowledge and wisdom, infinitely surpassing human comprehension. Thus the more of God which we are enabled to comprehend, the more we are convinced that his greatness and fulness will eternally be incomprehensible to all mind and spirit beneath him. Then the enquiring spirit may labor on, without fear that it will ever progress so far in knowledge and wisdom that there will be no more to learn; for God, too, progresses from

glory to glory, and from perfection to perfection, eternally onward and upward.

Well, friend Pope, if "all leave their spheres and rush into the skies," we will not be an exception: so let us give rein to our imagination, and soar away to that vast infinitude of worlds, the light from a few of which has reached this comparatively infinitesimal conglomeration of material atoms, called Earth. Now supposing we could fly with the velocity of thought, which travels ten thousand million times ten thousand million miles in a second, and thus keep on, in a straight line, as many years as there are atoms of matter in this globe, looking to the right and left, forward and backward, upward and downward, where fields of space widen continually, all filled with glowing and revolving orbs, each teeming with organic life in endless variety, and all inhabited by intelligent beings, whose relative positions, in the scale of animate existences, are what man's position is relative to the creatures of earth. Then let us suppose our extent of vision, every way, to be equal to the distance we have travelled in the straight line. Then let us suppose, what reason tells us is no mere supposition, but an obvious reality, that all the worlds in this inconceivable space, have been, for countless millions of ages, sending forth spirits continually, as earth sends forth her billions of human spirits, to people the spirit realm. After this, try to conceive that all the worlds and all the spirits which are contained within the designated space, make an aggregate infinitely less, in comparison to the all of immensity, than one grain of sand compared to this whole globe; and what—O what an empire, to be governed, in all its operations, by a personal God! O thou Infinite Aggregate of immensity, what shall a poor finite mind do with this vast thought! Take it—Oh! take it from feeble humanity, and let it be encountered by the seraphim of the highest heaven.

Admitting God to be a person, we might, with some degree of complacency, listen to the fable of Adam and Eve, in the garden of Eden, as a veritable reality. We might imagine that we were listening to the foot-fall of the Almighty, as he entered the garden, "in the cool of the day," (great potentates do not choose to go out at noon and expose their *persons* to the heat of the sun,) and could hear his voice calling sternly to his apple pilfering gardener: Adam! where art thou? And we might give credence to the story of Moses, that God placed him in a nook of a rock, and held his hand over his eyes, that he might not see his face, whilst he passed by, to give him an opportunity to see his hinder parts. We might be induced to believe that he did make one of a party, to whom Satan introduced himself, and that he commenced a familiar chat with the arch fiend, seeming to be on as friendly terms with him as if they had never had a passage at arms in heaven. We might suppose that he did not know, beforehand, how true his servant Job would be to him, and handed him over to the devil, giving him permission to torment him as much as he pleased, so that he did not quite kill him, for the purpose of testing his fidelity. With a God of circumscribed dimensions, such as personality indicates, the miraculous conception of Mary, which the whole orthodox christian world insist on; and that of the mother of Mary, which Romanism has recently added to its creed, would not be such hard mouthfuls of faith for rational minds to swallow.—Nor would it overtax the elasticity of human credulity, to believe that a being less than limitless Deity, might manifest the bad passions and common frailties of human nature, as the personal God of Judaism is represented to do continually. But to the Infinite totality of matter, mind and spirit, which Spiritualism presents to

humanity, as God, the application of such finite and debasing ideas, would be the very poorest quality of nonsense.

Now let us go back and take another look at man, and see how he is constituted; for it is said he was created in the likeness of God. If this be true, as the Bible says it is; and if he be a microcosm, or an epitome of the universe, as philosophy says he is; and if he be an embryo God, as angelic teachers represent him to be, and as he must be, if he is the microcosm which philosophy says he is, we will examine him, to see how God is constituted. Well, we find man constituted of infinite millions of atomic particles of matter, each one of which is a distinct individuality, endowed with a life principle which no change of any organic structure of which it may happen to be a component monad, can destroy. We find that all those particles which constitute an individual organization, are brought together by the law of affinity, arranged in their proper relative positions by the law of order, and kept in their reciprocal relations and dependencies by the law of harmony.

Thus is physical man constituted; and the system works harmoniously and beautifully in all its parts. But man is a trinity within himself. He is a man physical, a man intellectual and a man spiritual. All those particles of matter which constitute the man physical, give forth their more highly refined emanations, to build up the man intellectual, the germ of which is derived from its earthly parents. This member of the human trinity, has its seat in the sensorium, to which the five external senses convey all the intelligence they collect from the outer world. And in this department of his triune organization, man is little superior to the brute creation. Indeed, in many characteristics of instinct, he is vastly inferior to other specimens of animate nature. His judgment exceeds that of any other animal; but this, we think, may be more appropriately attributed to the third person in the trinity.

This third person is the spirit, the germ of which is said to be breathed into the embryo man, before he comes forth into the world of independent individualities. But we incline to the opinion that this breathing in, is done by mother nature—that the embryo spirit derives its germinal commencement from the same parental sources from which it derives its physical and intellectual germinations; rather than to the proposition that a single personal God is present at every physical conception, in this world and in all the other worlds in the universe, to breathe a living soul into every fetus. This would require an omnipresence which would be impossible to a personal God; which we shall endeavor to make manifest, before we close this article. The germ of the immortal spirit thus implanted, every constituent atom of the physical and intellectual man, contributes its most sublimated emanations to its growth. The intellect, with its constituent senses, collects knowledge for its edification and expansion; and it drinks in the inspirations of wisdom and truth, from the infinite father Spirit, according to its constitutional receptivity.

Thus analyzing, as well as we may, the man-epitome of the universe—the embryo God in humanity—we may be allowed to conceive that we have a miniature type, as far as it goes, of the infinite Father. From this type, we learn that God embraces the totality of the universe. The countless, limitless, endless, infinitude of worlds, of universes, of systems of universes, that float and revolve in the boundless fields of space, with all their thronging billions of organic life, together with the etherial matter which fills to repletion all intervening space, constitute the physical body of God. The refined particles of matter, in all these worlds, go to

constitute their respective productions of animate nature. And all the atoms which constitute these animate beings, as we have said of man, give forth their most sublimated emanations, to constitute the intelligent and immortal spirits, for whose germination, culture, growth and maturation, they are designed. These spirits, as they ripen, mature and throw off their aurelian shells, go forth and unite, according to their developments, with the innumerable angelic hosts that throng the spirit realm, all constituting the great and eternal soul of the univercelum, which is the aggregate spirit of God.

Thus, if our philosophy be true, God is constituted of the aggregate matter, intellect and spirit of all worlds. The matter constitutes his physical body; the intellect, with its active will, constitutes his second person, or his executive and governing power; and the spirit constitutes the all-pervading and all-directing wisdom principle, by which all being, all order and all motion are regulated. And the same law of harmony which binds atom to atom, in the human organism, operates, in infinite measure, to make one Great, aggregate Father spirit, of all constituent spirits. Hence it is that God is everywhere present. Hence it is that, "In God we live, move and have our being." Hence it is that God is in every thing, and every thing is in and of God. And hence it is that all spirits, from the neophyte soul, just set free from its earthly prison-house, to "the rapt Seraph that adores and burns," are continually doing the will of the Infinite Father; for they all, though perfectly individualized and free to follow the dictates of their own convictions and will, are constituent units of the aggregate God; and his wisdom and truth freely circulate through all his components, according to their respective developments.

If God be a person, he is not the entire aggregate of being. And if he be that entire aggregate, then he is just what we have represented him to be. There is no escape from either the one position or the other. Then the advocate for the position of personality, will be compelled to admit that the Infinite Father is but a part of the aggregate of being. If but a part—no matter how great the part—that which he is not, is without circumscription or limit, infinite in extent, and would make as many billions of such Gods as he is, as there are atoms of matter in the Solar System. From this conclusion, we think we may venture to affirm, there is no escape.

We have said that God, as well as all other beings in existence, progresses continually, and will progress eternally, from glory to glory and from perfection to perfection. This is obviously true, if he comprize the aggregate of being. If he be but a person, and do not so progress, he is stationary, at some height of elevation. Carry that point as high as the imagination can extend, and then multiply it into itself continually for a thousand million of centuries; and yet an eternally progressing human spirit would, at some point in the infinite rounds of eternal ages, go beyond him in all the attributes of deity. The conclusion, then, cannot be avoided, that God is not a person, but the aggregate of all being.

Help yourselves freely, Gentlemen.

We are highly gratified to see our editorials copied by our brethren of the quill and scissors, whether they give us credit or not. Some editors are so selfish that they would sooner have their light circumscribed than to let it shine without having their signs manual engraved upon each ray. We are happy to announce that

we are not of that illiberal class. All who are willing to aid us in extending the dim radiations from our little lamp, shall receive our grateful acknowledgements; and we shall be the last to cry "stop thief!" if they do not choose to label them with our *waif*.

To "Pietas."

The proper place for a poetical dedication of a book, is in the book itself, and not in a newspaper, or serial publication, to which it does not pertain.

The occasion of the above notice, suggests to our mind, that a few friendly remarks to poetical contributors generally, may be of service to them, and we hope they will be received in the spirit of kindness in which they are offered.

It is no more disparagement to those who are not gifted, by nature, with poetical genius, than it is to others that they are not endowed with the gift of healing or the spirit of prophecy.

All men and women are constituted differently; and this proves two things, which are, that variety is one of the determinate objects of Omniscience; and that every individual is necessary to all others, and all others are necessary to each individual. Man being gregarious and social in his nature, it would not have been wise, or Godlike, if all had been similarly and equally endowed; because then, each would have been independent of others, and there would have been no cement, or bond of union, to hold society together. Mutual dependence produces mutual friendship and harmony. Every one is good for something to himself and the community of which he is a member, and each should be content to act in his own appropriate sphere of usefulness. The eye should not shut itself up obstinately, because it cannot hear like the ear; nor should the feet rebel and refuse to carry the body, because they cannot carry the cane, as the hands do.

There are many minds otherwise well constituted, that are not adapted to literary acquirements. Some can speak well, but lack the genius to spread their thoughts on paper, in any way, with any degree of elegance or force. Many can write prose, in a manner to do honor to their literary and philosophical genius, but cannot poetize even respectably. To all, the exhortation, "Know thyself," is highly important to be heeded. It is true that those who want poetical genius cannot so well discover their deficiency as others can discover it for them; and such should view themselves through the medium of the better appreciation of ingenuous friends, and avail themselves of their criticisms. As well might a farmer undertake to plow with a yoke of pigs, or mow grass with a rake, as may a mind, not thereunto adapted, express its sentiments and feelings in poetical numbers. Even the spirits of those who have left behind them imperishable names as poets, cannot force through an unpoetical brain, any thing better than rhythmless doggerel.

Whatever department of labor or duty the mind is adapted to, that its energies should be devoted to; and that for which it is unqualified by nature, it should not be applied to by coercion.—Silver and gold are, nominally, more valuable than steel, and are more highly prized for their external beauty: but steel is good for a thousand uses, for which the others are worthless. The high and higher qualities of poetry, are like the silver and gold—beautiful for embellishment, and prized for their scarcity—whilst plain substantial prose, which is the medium of common sense, logic, philosophy and science, is, like steel, good for a thousand uses, for which poetry is worthless, however sublime it may be.—

But mere jingling doggerel, which is lawless, pointless, witless, and nearly senseless, as is the case with much of the poetical productions of spirits, in the body and out, is beneath comparison with the basest metals, and is as valueless as dross itself.

Lecture by E. C. Dayton.

MISS BROOKS, MEDIUM.

The cultivation and development of human thought lies at the root of all divine intellectuality; and the affections are sustained and invigorated by thought, and are based upon its justice and solidity; thereby holding a pre-eminence in the great reservoir of the human mind. And there are some minds who love facts as the miser would the glittering gold; not because of their value, but merely because they are possessions. They have no desire to use them as they should be used. As gold is neither raiment, food, nor shelter, but through its means there may all be obtained, so it is with facts. Of themselves they are neither wisdom, rationality, virtue nor love; but their intrinsic value lies in their being eternal mediums whereby we obtain what the mind requires.

Thought is a solvent of the soul, to reduce whatever is received to a condition in which all that is true and intuitive may be properly appropriated. The various stores which a finite education has heterogeneously piled up in the reservoir of the human mind, are useless to the mind, as they are merely placed there because they are possessions, and look largely, noble and useful to the world, and not because of their value, which arranges and classifies facts and circumstances in an order and harmony that does justice to the laws established in nature.—Thought is like a mighty river, flowing on and wreathing its banks with many beautiful emblems of nature, till at last it inwaves itself in the unfathomed ocean of futurity, where there is no end to its infinite vastness. Thought permeates and vitalizes the affections, and has an inward grace, whose loveliness fades not with passing time, nor is marred or alienated by sorrow, but is immortal, ever fresh and pure; and no familiarity can render uninteresting that beauty which it animates. The glory which announces its presence, and fills our souls with new inspirations, can never be obliterated, but remains through eternity, a treasure of the mind, a sweet monitor, and an ever enduring substance of the soul, which must constantly dualize with cynical precision the facts of life. Then from the glorious individualized world of thought, let every soul fill its bosom with the delectable odor; and though thy being may betoken no excellence of a finite education—no rhapsody of virtuous learned aspirations, and no brilliancy of human achievements; though all these thy being, from circumstances may be destitute, yet the laws of kindly sympathy will disclose moral susceptibilities, indigenous, and which, by constant growth, will expand into a glorious adolescence, and waft their inspiring odor to Nature's vast expanse.—And in viewing the divine universe of thought, we behold another world revolving round the great centre of being, glowing in the effulgent beauty of an eternal world, radiating from its bosom the feelings and hopes of a mighty humanity. It is the universe of love. It is felt in the fanning of the breeze; it is seen in Charity's modest home, and dwells with secret swell in the mind of man; and many live and die knowing nothing of this power of Heaven, except through their intellects.

Many love intellectually, and others love fashionably, and love not, because it is a conscious principle of the soul—a genuine element of character, which the history of every heart may afford the only authentic ground of judgment upon its merits and demerits. And its high significance can only be realized by natures of particular depth and exaltation. It is elevated above a blind instinct, and though the superficial reasoner gives it more feebleness than strength, yet it is the mighty tide which sways all that is sacred and eternal in animate life or being. To love, in one sense, according to the highest appreciation of some minds, is an animal necessity; but to love nobly and profoundly—to

love as God loves—is the union of mind with mind; the communion of soul with soul; and to dedicate the native sympathies of the mind to a correspondingly beautiful mind, is the noblest function of a human being.

Love, in its deepest import, is the highest interest of existence; and there are but few spirits in humanity, so utterly bereft of celestial affinities and attractions, as not to respond, in some measure, more or less cordially, to every sincere appeal to a capacity so divine and endearingly beautiful. And all the vague follies of an untiring, imaginative humanity, though it may profane the name, can never violate the sacred realities of love. Love is from God, and God is love. It is identified with religion, and springs from the soul itself. It is a revealed consciousness of heaven, and cannot be vital with falsehood. It sends no heavy shafts of cruelty into the bleeding soul, but is the unity and tenderness of charity and benevolence. It lights up 'the sanctuary' of the soul; and if the heart craves the love of others, it must learn to first love them; for loving words and kindly tenderness of being commend a reciprocation; and, if hearts love truly, the loves of the angels will dwell with them; genial zephyrs shall fan their throbbing brows, and life's gentle hand lightly touch their couch of finite affection, reflect with resplendent intensity upon the divine love that burnishes the walls of Heaven, and upon that universal justice which shall redress every wrong, and make eternal compensations for every heart-grief, while the flowers of love will fill your bosom with their benign affections and divine purity.

Love is a spirit hovering over the earth, and makes nature a paradise of beauty for man to look upon; and in every indwelling emotion of its life, beholds a copied image of his God. As the first buds of childish and innocent love, with their offerings of perfume, came to awaken in the heart of humanity, the deep and gushing well-springs of existence, and diffused their drops of blessings through life, so doth this infinite beauty of the skies, commingling and ever increasing, bound onward to the music of manhood, and can only cease with time. As the breezes awaken at morn or evening, and shake the dew from the flowers' leafy pinions, and caress the trees with the soft kissings of the morning dew, so doth love find its key-note in this changing scene of nature, and finds joy upon its wings. But the beauty of its signet is most perfectly expressed in the blush and smile that radiate from the pure and gentle bosom of the human soul, where in soft and guileless accents, whose utterance ever proves a generous heart, it speaks forth the immortality of mind, and the heart, where sweet thoughts nestle in their chosen resting place of loving beauty, speak in a voice sincere and kind of the faults of human nature, when the pure incense of love is scattered o'er the audience chamber of its own divine and immutable characteristics. The words of kindness and tenderness are copied facts from the pure bosom of an unsullied love; and with Heaven's own radiance on their wings, and the echo of their music faintly trembling o'er their strings, as they gather up the most exquisite notes from the mighty harp of God's love, in a world where all are fair, pure and select, as higher they go, the most beautiful strains of melody, until the impassioned voice of their music seems responding to the touch of the moon-beams; then and there, beyond the flight of thought, love weaves a chaplet of sparkling beauty, until its glory-gilded crown outshines empire's proudest diadem.

How sprang the worlds of living light from formless chaos and from primeval darkness, that now float in infinite worlds of animated beauty through space? and what power impels them on and guides their ceaseless roll, each in itself a bright immensity? What power, when evening, in its gentle sway, calls from the infinite distance, worlds, each circled in its solar train, and comes through a void as objects of light, which mark their being as definite, to man? It is alone the power of love, ever flowing in stupendous volumes, from the great and mighty—the immutable and eternal sensorium of all existences. And this little earth, ten thousand myriads infinitesimally smaller than the grain of sand on the ocean's whitened shore, when compared with infinity itself,

as it hangs in the airy space, with its stupendous power and might revolving in its own mighty apportioned course, and since first its breath was warmed by the attracting rays of the sun, is sustained in its balance—is kept in harmony with all else in its unrevealed and vaulted deep, and its heart of a thousand contending emotions, is made beautiful by the soul of love. And man, the beautiful, the strong, and should be free, with his mind—Heaven's great mystery, how came he to tread the path of wisdom, and his human intellect to erect a throne and place upon its shrine hopes he deemed undying and immortal, and in the lowest place in which his soul hath existed, sought a God? It is the all-pervading influence of love; and the mind, the power and intellect which is his, look up through their darkened natures to their source in Heaven, and read in the ocean, in the air, in the blue vaulted deep of the sky, the existence of love everywhere. And science copies thy noble soul, oh! God, from the gilded painting of nature, which thy hand hath made infinitely gorgeous, by a myriad lights and shades, known only to thy own powers of wisdom. Man hath drawn sublime similitudes by his mechanical skill, of thee, in his own emotional and impulsive mind; and yet when he addresses *God*, he feels that he is addressing him as a personale—an individual soul, instead of a Principle, disseminated with no regard to partiality, through all life and animation; and in addressing Thee, oh! God, he believes that Thou art the Great Plurality of being; yet an independent, individualized source. He feels upon his lips the sacred fire of immortality burn, and yet he earnestly asks for more. God's world of bliss, oh! man, is a counterpart of earth; and the mind, although formed of Heaven, has its principal converse with this rudimental universe.

Then, oh! send abroad a God-like love for all that live; and kind wishes and noble deeds will render back thy magnanimity of soul. Let thy bosom with noble thoughts be filled, until the soul seems beating with a thousand hearts, and let only true charity of the heart's spring, time, from the rosy breath of love, breathe a new being into the way-worn pilgrim, who wisely and calmly bears the burden of dark uncheered hours. And though the skeptic may scoff, and the bigot deride, yet seraph joy descends from the deep blue skies. The human heart is an existence, but lives in the light of many shrines; and only God can follow the changing tune of its thousand strings. Its own pure feelings are oft too falsely trusted, and fondly gives itself in tenderness and sympathy, to others a slave; and when betrayed and unkindly deserted, feels the weight of its loneliness too keenly; and because of its own kindness, strives to hide its bitterness and disappointment in the smile of a wounded pride.

True affection consists in being firm in every adverse circumstance of life, and remaining charitable when faults appear; for a true heart will look leniently upon every fault, and love the same. And when you dissect the characteristics of others, refer to yourself, if you would coldly criticise what is imperfect; for not a single heart pulsates beneath the dome of heaven, but has *some* misgivings. If you would find fault with humanity, you find fault also with God; for by his power, by his love, were you all created, placed upon the earth, by individual responsibility to paint your destiny with the shades of wrong, as by the lights of truth. When heaven writes with unerring pencil, on thy dear breast, the love of its own bright home, live true to the true sketch of God, in thyself, though thy heart may be branded with slander, and the invidious falsehood, the heartless jeer, and all the dark libels of earth, with pointed finger, with cold averted eye, and with insult sink thy soul almost into utter and hopeless despair. Yet mistake not love for passion; for there is as much difference between the two as there is majesty of being between man and God. Thy refuge will be only in heaven; and while you live, live truly, nobly; and when the heart droops its branches to the earth, and leaf by leaf drops from the tendrils of hope and affection, and, like the wounded dove clasps its wings to its side, to conceal the blood-stained arrow of wrong and injustice, sapping away, in its piercing pangs, the strength of human life, and every feeling seems frozen by the chilling cares of the world! Oh! still

live true to the love of thy being; for Heaven is not far distant, where thy soul will find rest; for EVERY heart can make the following complaint:—

"There are some things I cannot bear,
Some looks which rouse my angry hate,
Some hearts whose love I would not share,
Till earth and heaven were desolate.
I cannot bear to be with men
Who only see my *weaknesses*;
Who know not what I might have been,
But scan my spirit as it is;
And when my heart would gush with feeling,
To catch one kind, one sunny look,
When *love* would be a leaf of healing;
But scorn's a thing I will not brook—
Oh, it is hard to put the heart
Alone and desolate away;
To curl the lip in pride, and part
With the kind thoughts of yesterday.
'Tis strange they know not that the chill
Of their own looks hath made me cold;
What though my words fall seldom; still
Their own proud bearing hath controlled
My better feelings. They forget
I have a *heart of kindness yet*."

As ever, E. C. DAYTON.

For the Age of Progress.

Meeting of the Friends of Human Progress.

The friends of the above named association have just held their first annual meeting at Kerr's Corners, North Collins, Erie county, N. Y., commencing on the 29th of August, and continuing three days.

The meeting continued to increase in interest and in numbers to its close, until the Presbyterian Church, in which it was held, was crowded to its utmost capacity. On the last day many thronged outside, anxious to listen to the glowing words and truthful sentiments, as they fell from the lips of the several earnest speakers, who attended this association.

The largest liberality was extended and maintained towards all present, to utter his or her thoughts, each on their own responsibility, in the spirit of toleration, whilst *Love* and a beautiful *Harmony* characterized the meeting throughout its several sessions, not only in the discussions of the various resolutions which came before the meeting, but in welcoming to its platform, alike, persons of every shade of religious belief, philanthropist and reformer, thereby eliciting much thought, and a free exercise of the various gifts and faculties of the mind; beautifully acknowledging the foundation principle upon which this great moral and religious movement is based, viz; that its platform is as broad as Humanity, its creed as extensive as Nature's wide domain, and its only Trinity, "Equality, Fraternity and Harmony."

Many persons from other States attended the meeting; among others our much loved friends, Joseph A. Dugdale and wife, whose presence gave much life and animation to the meeting, and whose counsel strengthened us in our endeavors, and whose loving spirit, and kind words, inspired our hearts with love for each other, and also toward the great source whence emanates all love.

The various wrongs and evils which crush and afflict humanity, were dealt with in a becoming spirit; Slavery, War, Intemperance; the oppression of woman; the evils arising from the use of tobacco; the injurious effects of the present system of dress; the pompous display at funerals, and the saddening effects of habiliments of mourning; all claimed a share among the discussions, and called forth much interest and many brilliant ideas and sentiments from the audience.

The *spirit of prayer* and of *song* was most harmoniously breathed forth throughout its several sessions; and at its close the spirit and power of *Love* was most signally felt to pervade and permeate all

hearts present : cementing all into the feeling of holy sympathy for the common *Brotherhood of Man*, and reverence for the universal *Fatherhood of God*.

The Friends, in the different localities, were prompt and efficient in securing homes, and entertaining strangers from abroad, with open doors, and hearts ready to receive, and make happy, all who favored them with their presence, in the spirit of brotherly fraternity ; and all seemed to rejoice that such a meeting had been held. May they be continued annually, that the spirit of progress which has been awakened, be strengthened and kept alive in the hearts of the people.

In behalf of the meeting.

CHARLES C. KIRBY,

SARAH A. BURTIS,

Secretaries.

BROTHER ALBRO :

If you please you can say to your numerous readers, that the medium who had that beautiful and convincing phase of mediumship upon the arm, has lately left Rochester, for some part of Jefferson county. As I was informed by her mother, not to cultivate her mediumship, but to earn a livelihood by labor, evidently unwilling to give the public an opportunity of witnessing it—or at least the more elevated in society, an opportunity to witness it. This is truly to be regretted.

SARAH A. BURTIS.

For the Age of Progress.

ELBRIDGE, Onondaga Co., N. Y., Sept., 1856.

FRIEND ALBRO :

Our clergyman of the Presbyterian school, recently gave the dear people of his charge one of the old-fashioned total depravity sermons. It was about as well spiced with devilism as his old Majesty's nature could possibly be with orthodoxy. And these characteristics were set forth as the inherent nature of every individual of the human family.—It seems that it matters not what devils our priests can make of the entire human family, if they can only make it subserve their salaried aims and ends, and at the same time prove it by good authority, viz., the Bible. That big book is ransacked ; and if a passage has any bearing in that direction, it is introduced, no matter if it makes of the Almighty a devil, by imputation. If it comes from the Bible it is enough ; this is the end of all authority : Bible first ; God next ; then the devil ; and last and least, the devilish human family. The Bible being first, all the other fixings are mere appendages, and of minor importance ; the characteristics of which are clearly delineated in the big book.

Let us see how the character of God is there set forth : Genesis 1 and 2—and in the decalogue. "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is ; and rested the seventh day," &c. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them ; and God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good." Now, was this so ? Did God make all things in six days ? Yes, the Bible says so. Well ; were they all very good ? Yes, the Bible says so. Was man very good ? Certainly ; so the Bible says. But let us see how soon this scene is changed, And God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was *only evil continually*." Was this so ? Yes, the Bible says so. Man was just as the Bible represented him to be. "*Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was evil, and only evil continually* ; or, in other words, *totally depraved*. But is this the condition of man ? Yes ; so says the minister—so says the Bible—no matter what the Bible says to the contrary. These are the facts. This is the condition of the human family. The Lord looked down from heaven to see if there were any that did good, but they had all gone out of the way ; there was none that did good ; no, not one, &c., &c. All this is Bible, and it needs no argument to the contrary. "The whole head is sick ; the whole heart faint ; from the crown of the head, to the sole of the foot, there is no sound-

ness, but wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores." All this is Bible, and from these words the text was selected, accompanying them with similar passages. How easy it is for a priest to make out that all mankind are devils incarnate ; and God, the author of their being disappointed, deceived, dissatisfied, mad, and bent on vengeance. Hear what he says : "*And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth ; both man and beast, and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air, for it repenteth me that I have made them.*"—Gen. vi.—5, 6.

What a character is man ! What a character is God, according to this representation. But the minister says : though man is *totally depraved*, he is not as bad as he *can be*, or as bad as he *will be* when all the restraints of education are thrown off. So we see there will be a difference between *total depravity*, and—what shall we call it ? *Teetotal depravity* ! One would naturally suppose there was the difference of the north and north-west side of a hair. It is really laughable to hear these divines prating about *total depravity* and *restraints of education* ! Restraints of public opinion ; restraints of popular sentiment ; restraints of the Bible ; the preached word ; the fear of hell ; of future rewards and punishments, &c., &c. All these things, say they, restrain the totally depraved sinner, and prevent him from being what he will be when sent to hell, with his associate devils, where all restraints will be removed, and he left to act out his own nature, in cursing God and blaspheming his name *forever and ever*.

Remember, reader, this is orthodoxy. Both God and man are here represented according to orthodox teachings, and its interpretation of the Bible ! Well, if this be so, if mankind are such beings as are here represented ; they must have been rendered so by an orthodox education ; and the sooner we are freed from it the better. Let us pray to become heathen—savages, any thing but such monsters. Well ; orthodoxy would have mankind believe that they are totally depraved, and on the way to hell, and will surely be damned, unless the orthodox priests make them over ; make them as they should be—seeing God had had failed to do so in the first creation.

Previous to this regeneration, "the heart was *deceitful above all things and desperately wicked*." This must be believed as a truth—a distinctive feature—a fundamental item of belief ; no matter what Jesus says to the contrary, when he asserts of little children, "*of such is the kingdom of Heaven*." And "such" may be represented in other parts of the Bible, as "*every precious stone* ;" the sardix, topaz, and the diamond ; the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper ; the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle and gold. The Bible may say, "thou wast perfect in thy ways, *from the day thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee*." And yet man was born *totally depraved*—"*shapen in iniquity*." This last sentiment is fundamental and true ; no matter about any opposing sentiment. But let us leave orthodox education, and go back to a period prior to such teaching. Let us introduce the natives of the forest before orthodoxy trod this American soil. What said Columbus when writing back to the King and Queen, touching the character of the red men ? He used this strong language : "I swear to your Majesties, that there is not a better people in the world than these ; none more affectionate, affable or mild. They love their neighbors as themselves, and always speak smilingly."

Captain Bonneville, speaking of the Nez Percés, says : "Simply to call these people religious, would convey but a faint idea of the deep hue of piety which pervades their whole conduct. Their honesty is immaculate, and their purity of purpose, and their observance of the rites of their religion are most uniform and remarkable. They are certainly more like a nation of saints than a horde of savages." Can as much be said of our orthodox brethren ? Such savages ought to come and convert them, instead of *vice versa* : and then of their faith.—"Their notion of immortality," writes Bancroft, "was a faith in the continuance of life ; they did not expect a general resurrection, nor could they be inclined in any way to believe that the body would be

raised up. To them intelligence was something more than a transitory accident, and they were unable to conceive of a cessation of life."—"But they all believe," says Catlin, "in a future state of existence, and in a future administration of rewards and punishments; and they believe these punishments are not eternal, but commensurate with their sins."

"This is the education of the savage; not the orthodox Christian.—Well may the spirits of this age write on the wall of the latter—"*Mene, mene Tekel Upharsin.*"

A. C.

For the Age of Progress.

LOCKPORT, Sept. 4, 1856.

FRIEND ALBRO :

The following is a discourse written by myself, and read at our Harmonial Meeting :

BELOVED BRETHREN :—I feel much inclined to make known to you my impressions, and some of my little experiences, on the frightful subject of law, order and evil spirits, which occasionally attend (I would not say trouble) our circles. What I say on the subject must be in my own simple, illiterate way, except I have some impressions from my beloved guardian spirit friends from another sphere. I have heard from different mediums, at different times and places, (or spirits through them) communications pertaining to a thing which has interested me much, and which looks to me very reasonable. That is, that no person can or will ever be much troubled with spirits out of the form, of a lower grade than themselves, and that, when we conduct ourselves with propriety, our guardian angels will ever watch over us, and defend us from such spirits as would influence us to do wrong. I am satisfied that I shall never be troubled by evil and troublesome spirits in my circle, or in any place, or in any respect, any longer than my guardian spirits think best, in order to produce in me a higher state of development, and to teach me all that is, is right, and that there is a point in the law of nature, wherein that which sometimes looks wrong to me, is required to be so, in order to the fulfilment of Nature's laws.

The fear of a low order of spirits has caused much trouble and many prejudices in our otherwise harmonial society. I found that our learned and much esteemed friend from Baltimore, who was visiting us a few days past, was laboring under the same impression that many others have been subject to, in the circle of my acquaintances. But I think he left the place with some different views from what he brought with him. He seemed to think that if a medium did not manifest learning and science all the time, it was an evil spirit attending the medium, and that it would be right to send that spirit away as soon as possible. He seemed in that respect to lose all confidence in the guardian spirits attending; although he believed they knew best what was right, and were able to expel the evil spirits, if there were any such trying to control the medium. My friend seemed to think, if the medium came up to his standard of right, it was a good spirit; if not, it was otherwise. But I was with him to visit a medium, who produced in him, I think, quite different impressions; at least so he intimated to me. The medium (or the spirit) told us that spirits of a lower order than ourselves could have but little influence over us; none to injure us; and that we could not always know, at first, whether the medium was controlled by a good or an evil spirit. The medium said, some times when we heard rough and unpleasant language from a medium, it was caused by a highly developed spirit; in order either to develop the medium or the circle; and he gave us to understand that every thing was right in its place, and that the spirits were the best judges when and where to apply them. The medium said that, in many instances spirits that wished to communicate to us, were of so high an elevation and refinement that they could not approach so gross material as ourselves, and in order to communicate, were obliged to communicate through more than one spirit medium before it could approach the medium from whom we receive communications, so that some times we hear, from the same high and developed spirits, communications that are not pleasing to us, still they are calculated to develop our dark minds, and lead us to more ex-

alted views of the glorious laws of nature, by communing with us in a manner better adapted to our immediate understanding and condition.

Brethren, all mankind, by the laws of nature, are on a level. And why should we fear or despise an undeveloped spirit? A poor, low, unfortunate being, who, if entirely neglected by all the rest of the family of man, might, perhaps, continue in his deplorable state of darkness and misery, for thousands of years, before he would progress to a comfortable degree of development; when, perhaps, a word of consolation and good advice from a spirit, even in the form, would give him a direction on the line of progression that would be a source of infinite good to him and infinite pleasure to the giver. I am satisfied that I have seen an instance of the kind. I have known a medium (while in rather a frolicsome circle,) influenced and controlled by one of the most filthy Irishmen I ever saw or knew. Even, according to his own account of himself, he was a drunkard, a thief, a burner of barns, a murderer, and in every respect bad; and in every respect, I am satisfied that he told us, in the circle, the truth. For the bones of the man whom he said he murdered (or some like them) were found where he said he put them; and several things corroborated his account so well, that we had not much doubt of his truthfulness. The spirit made himself known to me very oddly: When I inquired his name, said he, ye blackguard, don't ye remember 'ould Caroty (a nickname,) and don't ye remember the time when a paddy came among your hands in the quarry with a joog of whiskey, and trated them, and ye drove him off ye blackguard? Don't ye remember it ye blackguard? He finally brought me to some recollection of the circumstance, and something of his conversation to me at the time. Why I name this thing is the effect caused by that interview. While describing his filthy and low condition, a young lady present pitied the miserable condition of the poor creature, and appeared to feel sad on his account, which the poor thing seemed to notice in a moment, and exclaimed aye; ye are a darlint crature, an ye are the first sowl that has ever pitied poor Caroty; I never thought that any one would do the like. He has got the control of mediums, for a short time, in quite a number of instances, since that time; and latterly exhibited a wonderful improvement in his manners and language.

Progression, in instances, is very manifest. He ever, when he gets the control of a medium, seems to almost worship the young lady that pitied him, and says if it had not been for her, he should never have known he was any thing but poor old filthy Caroty. I think, my friends, that even by this little incident, we may see that evil or undeveloped spirits are not to be feared or shunned. This spirit claimed, in the first place, to control the medium, in order to let a poor widow know that her husband, who died several years ago, was not a participator in the murder of that man, as many at the time suspected he was. But the Irish spirit says he was alone, and watched the place where he put him, for six months, for fear some one would find him. He wished us to inform the widow, for she was fearful that her husband had had something to do with the murder, but that was not the case.

Yours for spiritual development, SETH WHITMORE.

To Our Patrons.

We deem it proper to notify those of our subscribers who have paid for the present volume, and nothing beyond, that their subscriptions will have run out when they receive **WHOLE NUMBER 104**, which closes the second volume. We give this notice, thus early, that they may renew their subscriptions before that number is issued, which will be on the 4th day of October next. We have no friends to spare, and should be sorry if we should have to drop any, for want of promptness.

Another fatal Catastrophe!

As we are going to press, (Thursdry, Sept. 25,) we learn that the steamer Niagara was burnt to the water's surface, last night, off Sheboygan. Fifty lives are said to be lost. We have not the particulars of the dreadful tragedy.

AGE OF PROGRESS.

STEPHEN ALBRO EDITOR.
THOMAS GALES FORSTER,
Corresponding Editor and Agent.

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All communications and letters of business concerning the Age of Progress must be addressed to the proprietors, Messrs. Murray & Baker.

Buffalo Harmonial Conference.

It was expected that Bro. FORSTER would be on hand, as usual, on Sunday last, to be used by the spirits; but he received a call, late in the week, to attend a funeral, in Genesee county; and his controlling spirits decided that he should respond to the call.—Fortunately, however, Dr. JOHN BROOKIE arrived from St. Louis, on Sunday morning, and supplied Bro. F.'s place, on the rostrum, both afternoon and evening. And, although public speaking, excepting on the science of healing, is not the field in which the spirits design him to labor, the lectures delivered through him, were characterized by sound, practical common sense and instructive philosophy. Having been on the road and without sleep, for three previous nights, and having had his mind exercised and annoyed, for some days, with the perplexities incident to a long journey, with the charge of a family, he was in no condition to be used as a lecturer.

We will embrace this opportunity to remark to our readers, that by spirit direction, Dr. BROOKIE has removed to this city, with his family, to make this his permanent residence. He will be employed in healing, teaching the principles of healing, aiding to develop healing media, and giving instructions in the science of physiology, and the laws which govern the human economy, generally. As he is not yet permanently located, those who require his services, may learn of his whereabouts, by calling at this office.

Spiritually Born.

On Wednesday, September 17, Dexter, oldest son of J. F. and J. Carter, of Laona, Chautauque county, N. Y., aged 19 years, was called by the divine law of attraction to bid his dearest friends a transient adieu, for a more interior and sublime life in eternity's expanded home. The disease which produced this change of life was a malignant species

of typhoid fever. When disease and decay touched him with palsyng finger, he was far distant from home, in a western country; but as if intuitively admonished that kindred spirits were on the wing to bid him hence, at first indisposition he immediately started for home, arriving there on Friday, just in time to greet and recognize his friends, before, delirious with fever, on the Wednesday following, his weary head pillowed upon the sweet affections of home, he languished into immortal life, leaving his soul's earth casket to be interred by kind friends, amid the hallowed tears of kindred sympathy, and among the dear scenes of his childhood.

The struggle between disease and its victim was brief. It is over—he is at rest—his mind, free from warping prejudice, and open to conviction, easily inclined to an undoubting belief in the spiritualistic philosophy. How inexpressibly consoling is this reflection to those who inculcate its teachings and survive his departure. To the bereaved parents and loving sister, we tender our warmest sympathies. To you we need not speak of heaven and reunion. You have that hope strong within your hearts. You have the rich consolations which flow from the glorious spiritual gospel. But yet Nature weeps that one so tenderly cherished has outwardly perished—that the fountain of his earth-life was dried when its gushes were quickest and most vivifying; that his hopes were blighted in their embryo; but again, you know he lives, acts, enjoys, remembers, loves—loves those he loved on earth, with expanded thrilling intensity; and will often hover near, calling softly to you from out his hallowed home, taking cognizance of the scenes, objects and events of earth; his deathless soul clothed with a glorious body, fitted to the superior condition of his conscious individualized existence.

He has not gone to a strange country of which you have never heard, and with which you can never communicate; but he has gone where ecstatic harmony quickens the pulses of new-born immortality, to that familiar clime, all glowing with spiritual life, loveliness and imperishable goodness, cloudless, glorious and happy.

Earth cannot typify the skies of blue, the silver flashing waters, the fairy-tinted odorous flowers, the living beauties of his angel home, the liquid melody of archangel choirs, vibrating with harmonic sweetness throughout the vast immensities of God's love.

The inhabitants of that land greet us daily with smiles of glad recognition, distilling on mourning hearts dear messages of love and remembrance; their sweet faces all radiant with charms we never dreamed of here; glowing with immortal affection, tinted with the hues of un fading loveliness. And this country, where dwell our dear departed, will soon be ours forever. Yes,

“There we shall meet—all meet to love,
With love that hath no trembling fears,
In that dear home, far, far above,
This land of tears.”

L. A.

For the Age of Progress.

The following letter was received from a dear departed one, by her surviving counterpart, through the mediumship of Mr. REDMAN, the test medium, whilst at Cleveland:

My dearest companion in the flesh:

Through the kindness of this medium, I this moment send out my spirit to meet thine. As one drop of nature's blood unites with another, so does my sympathy unite with thee. I see, gradually developing, this great philosophy, like a garden which long has been deprived of water, but is now blest with an abundance. The earth welcomes it—great is the demonstration; and wert thou a spiritual being, privileged to gaze into the minds of man, thou wouldst behold strange sights, and thy interior would be filled with awe; for mighty is the commotion upon the waters of material mind.

Vineyards multiply, and the Great Just Cause smiles complacently at the progress of his work, which at creation he begun, but not till now has witnessed the results of the beginning. Seraphs, in their Elysian homes, tune their lyres to celebrate the glorious era, and all hea-

ven resounds with the harmony of minds which are daily being multiplied on earth. Truly, angels rejoice over one sinner that repenteth; and well may mortality imagine a host rejoicing in these many mansions.

Heaven is thy home, my earthly companion, and I am one of Heaven's disciple spirits. I gather thy pearly thoughts as the husbandman gathers the grain; and I place each one where it may be food for thee, in the great eternal granary. I am ever near thee; and though these opportunities are few, they are the more prized.

THY SPIRIT MATE AND ANGEL GUARDIAN.

For the Age of Progress.

MR. ALBRO:—I feel it due to Mr. G. C. EATON, as well as to the cause of spiritualism, to offer you the following statement for publication:

I had been afflicted with a pain in my side for four years, which grew worse continually, till June last, when I was completely prostrated, and was totally unable to sit up. I employed a regular physician, who treated me in accordance with the legitimate practice of the allopathic school. Receiving no benefit from this treatment, I sent for G. C. EATON, the healing medium, who examined me under spirit influence, and informed me that my liver and heart were both diseased. He operated on me then, by manipulation, which he repeated ten times subsequently, at as many visits. After the last of these visits, and on the day of his last operation, I was able to ride one hundred miles in the cars.—From that time to the present, I have gained health and strength continually, and can now say, what neither I nor any of my friends ever expected to be able to say truthfully, that I am a well woman, and am twenty pounds heavier than I was when Mr. EATON first visited me.

ROMANDA SEAMANS.

Buffalo, Sept. 24th, 1856.

Spiritualism in Ohio.

BUFFALO, September 22d, 1856.

MR. ALBRO:

I have just returned from a tour through the northern part of Ohio. The friends of Spiritualism in that section are doing a good work. In the town of Geneva, situated on the Cleveland and Erie Rail Road, where Spiritualism was introduced but little more than a year ago, three-fourths of the inhabitants, at least, have become converts to the Spiritual belief. Notwithstanding the most strenuous efforts of *three Orthodox ministers*, their numbers are still steadily increasing, and they are erecting and have nearly completed a fine edifice on the principal street, in which to hold their meetings.

At a place called Cold Brook, a few miles from Geneva, there is a family of mediums named Ingersoll. The manifestations produced through them are of the same class as those produced by the well-known Davenport media, though they are rather unique in character. When circles are being held, the spirits will allow no person to remain in the room *without removing his boots*. Immediately on entering the room, you are requested so to do; and if you in the least demur at obeying this absurd mandate, you are summarily ejected by one of the mediums, who, though a mere youth, seems at such times to be endowed with the strength of a Hercules. They are also very exacting of the medium himself; and, among other things, they require him to eschew the use of animal food. The reason they give for this is, that a vegetable diet renders the human organization more susceptible of their controlling influence. Moreover, they will not allow him to sleep *in a bed*; but if he, thinking to elude their vigilance, attempts clandestinely to enjoy this luxury, though it be in the daytime, the bed is tipped up upon its side, and he is unceremoniously "dumped" out.

I attended the grove meeting held at New Lime, but, as I believe there has already appeared a communication in relation to it in your columns, I will only say that it passed very pleasantly.

More anon,

JOHN F. SWEET.

From A. J. Davis's Penetrals.

Questions on the Despotism of Opinion.

How many forms of despotism are there?

There are three forms of despotism—two are institutional; one is individual—namely, political despotism, ecclesiastical despotism, and the despotism of opinion.

What can be said of North America as a country?

Politically considered, and notwithstanding its justification of chattel slavery, North America, as a country, is the freest and the best. But France, England and Germany, while laboring under numerous oppressions, enjoy more freedom of opinion. In America the despotism of opinion is mighty. It is gradually growing less powerful, methinks; still, it rules the masses. It leads to the organization of fashion—to imitation—to a standard of judgment by which majorities govern minorities, the strong the weak, might is confounded with right, and the worst forms of tyranny and the best phases of liberty dwell side by side 'neath the shade of the nation's banner; the symptoms of future alterations.

What do you mean by an opinion?

By opinion, I do not mean anything which is demonstrable—such as the facts of history, the phenomena of science, or the principles of philosophy: these are susceptible of the most thorough demonstration.—Opinion, on the contrary, is a vagabond, rambling about in the fields of perceptive logic—an illegitimate child of the intellect—a sort of bastard, so to say, whose parentage can never be fully traced nor legally defined. Opinion, therefore, is derived from no well-ascertained fact, from no established principle. If it were thus derived, it would no longer be opinion, but knowledge absolute, which precludes opinion.

What is the origin of an opinion?

Opinion is conceived and brought forth by such parents as inferences, deductions, presumptions, assumptions, guesses, mistakes, misstatements, misunderstandings: these all are eggs, each the center of a, bantering opinion; each the germ of procreative despotisms, brooded by little minds and time-serving institutions. Supernaturalism and metaphysical theories spring from conjectures—which, becoming an opinion, by general consent and not by understanding, attains to authority, and denies thenceforward the right of individual free discussion.

What have you ascertained by investigation?

By investigation I have acquired this knowledge—that all theology is despotic theory, an opinion; and nothing more.

Do you make any distinction between theology and some of the doctrines of Jesus?

Yes; the doctrines of Jesus, concerning morality and spiritualism, are immutable truths. Theology, on the contrary, is not based upon Nature's facts and principles, but, as already said, upon inferences, presumptions, assumptions, which became despotic just like every other opinion. Knowledge has no slavery in it: opinion has no liberty.—Opinion is the builder of dungeons; the inventor and proprietor of torturing racks and rods of iron; the grand Inquisitor who first kindles the martyr's fire, and then executes its terrible judgments. Such is the despotism of opinion. Absolute knowledge, being inherently positive, precludes all opinion; for ever independent of mere belief. Of course, I mean such knowledge as that which the entire soul acquires by industry through its appropriate channels of consciousness; that which, in the due process of integral growth, becometh Wisdom. And I repeat the affirmation that, church-theology is merely an opinion; a subjective belief; destitute of that knowledge which it arrogates to itself.

Can you give evidence to strengthen this assertion?

Yes; church-theology, for example, is believed by persons who are in general quite ignorant of the extents of Nature; its laws, its functions, its relations, its harmonies, are never perceived by the believer in a dismal theology. But the sectarian mind, "never taught to stray, far as the solar walk," studies geography perhaps, and sees this globe as the center, the sun and the moon stars all as so many attendant supernumeraries, and special providences as a human necessity to salvation. Our earth the center of creation! a stationary orb, the largest, most important, about whose imperturbable majesty the entire heavens revolve! And the earth's inhabitants, the chief of all Deific concern.

Have we not outgrown this contracted idea?

Yes; thank God! the soaring soul of Science has overswept the limitations of Ignorance—the prolific source of old theology—and man's slowly but surely developing Knowledge has repressed the tides of the dead seas of error, and set bounds to the despotism of opinion.

Where did the world get the idea that this globe was the center of the universe?

The world received it from the oriental tribes. Genesis teaches the paramount position, size, and importance of this earth; the Sun, the Moon, the myriads Stars, these are subordinate and subservient. But the "Milky Way" was long since churned up by Astronomy, and divided into vast constellated groups, the magnitude of some of which is sufficient to fill to overflowing our entire planetary system—out-measuring the vast orbit of Neptune—swelling over and expanding away into the immense depths of space beyond!

Can you illustrate your idea of this planetary magnitude?

Yes; "Alcyone," for illustration, is a name for one of the brightest stars in the Pleiades. Around this magnificent center, our entire solar fraternity—the Sun, and its vast family of planets—travels swiftly, noiselessly, ceaselessly, without a moment's rest, without a moment's fatigue. And yet, like a living, breathing, harmonial Man, our planetary organization lies seemingly destitute of animation, near the center of a wide spread bed of interlacing and inhabited stars. To the external sense he appears to be asleep, and dreaming, on the couch of Infinitude. Notwithstanding which (apparent inertia,) our solar body journeys forward at the frightful velocity of four hundred thousand miles per day; and yet, although its speed is so great, it requires eighteen millions and two hundred thousand years for our visible sun and its planetary dependencies to revolve once round "Alcyone!" This primary is nearly one hundred and eighteen millions times greater in magnitude than our sun; which again, as you well know, is many times larger than the earth, or any other related globe. Some stars are yet so distant, that thirty millions of years will sink into oblivion, and infinite scores of human beings will live and die out of matter, ere their light can reach our globe! And it will help your conception to remember that light can fly two hundred thousand miles per second.—With this revelation of Nature before us, what shall we think of the oriental cosmological ideas—of the basis of the old but popular theology—Genesis, which maketh earth the center of all creations, and the earth's inhabitants the source of infinite trouble to Deity!

Suppose a man should study astronomy and comprehend something of immensity, would he not, if discordant, still believe in the doctrines of theology?

Yes; theology is of necessity believed by those who are constitutionally discordant—by those who feel evils within—who infer therefrom the existence of devils—and possess, as they think, internal evidence of total depravity. It is a curious fact that the most vicious persons are the firmest believers in literal and future hell-punishments. Those who are enough unfortunate to be thieves, liars, highwaymen, pirates, slaveholders, and money-getting deacons, are fellow-believers and sometimes fellow-worshippers of the horrors and atrocious decrees of popular theology.

When does the mind lose such belief?

When the mind is well-balanced—when the person becomes measurably self-harmonial and as much civilized in religious matters as in cur-

rent politics and in the commonplace of life—then, popular theology leaves it as naturally and rapidly as the beasts of the forest flee before the peaceful march of Humanity.

Is not a disunal theology natural to certain temperaments?

Yes; Theology is naturally believed by those who have large organs of cautiousness, secretiveness, and a morbid conscientiousness. These temperaments take judgment into custody. It is another curious fact that old theology (as an opinion) never gets into the upper rooms of the mind. It goes far underneath—lurking about in the caves and dark retreats of the cerebellum—like a polar bear sometimes, and like a viper too, that keeps sequestered, because knowing its place.

Is there not much invidiousness in this assertion?

Far from it; in making this assertion, I do not forget that popular theology receives support from many talented and conscientious and benevolent men and women. But is it not worth remembering, that the most intelligent and courageous among its supporters, have been apologizers for the system? Have they not all failed in justifying theology to the intellectual faculties of mankind? Dr. Adam Clarke, for example, was under the necessity of writing an elaborate commentary on the Bible.

Why did Dr. Clark write his commentary?

He wrote it simply to offer an explanatory apology to human nature for believing that which an intelligent and healthy Reason will eternally repudiate.

What is a commentary?

A commentary is an attempt, in many cases, to defend and extenuate a matter which is deemed either impossible, ambiguous, contradictory, or improbable. Could you look into the beginning and inceptive causes of the various commentaries on the Bible, I know you would be astonished to find that each writer worked from a disagreeable personal necessity; a method of allaying the positive protestations of the intellectual faculties and intuition. Dr. Beecher's recent scholastic work—"The Conflict of Ages"—is the most unsuccessful effort of a talented apologist; to satisfy the demands of human reason; to subdue the "conflict" between his own lower and higher faculties. The last fifty years are remarkable for apologetical sermons.

Does not the presence of evil in the world convince many of old theology?

Yes; theology, as an opinion, is entertained by scores of honest minds, and because they cannot understand the origin, the nature, and the cure of evil. (Such should read the Great Harmonia.) They consider evil to be absolute; not relative and conditional. Many believe that evil results from violating the verbal commands of God; not that evils and sins (so called) take their rise primarily from man's ignorance of his own nature, and the consequent abuse of it.

How can philosophy help the world?

The Harmonial Philosophy will do this world a monumental service by explaining the nature and demonstrating the cure of evil—a work which theology cannot do. Why not? Because theology is an opinion—based, as already seen, upon inferences, inductions, presumptions &c., and not upon Knowledge, which has no fellowship with opinion or despotic fanaticisms.

What other causes are there for believing theology?

Theology is believed by persons who, being victimized from childhood, now do homage at the shrine of popular educational religion; which they would not continue to do, if they could see that all true religion is innate; not educational—that all true life is from within, inbred and divine; not absorbed, as a sponge drinks water.

Who profess to believe theology?

Theology is professedly believed by persons who worship at the shrine of policies, expediences, compromise measures, shirks, &c.; by persons who believe Principle to be very good in poetry and metaphysics—congenial to fanatical reformers and revolutionists—as I shall hereafter demonstrate.

Would popular theology depart with the advent of correct knowledge?

Yes; it is impossible for an intelligent person to believe the myths of ancient Egypt.

What has been the experience of those who have sought for knowledge in the empire of Nature?

This question would require a careful compilation of the history of science, and a chapter descriptive of theological opposition to independent investigation. As this is a "delicate question," the reader will allow me to be silent for the next twenty minutes, giving time for the *Weekly Pennsylvanian* to answer:

"We believe firmly, not only that the world is growing wiser, but better also—and nothing has conduced to this desirable state of facts more than the accuracy and solidity of modern learning. The vague mists and superstitions which clouded the intellect of past ages, have, in a great degree, been dissipated, and men begin to reason for themselves, and the people are willing to be guided by what appears in accordance with the dictates of common sense. The instructors of youth, and the promulgators of the truths of science, are no longer afraid to follow the promptings of genius, by the terrors of a brutish public opinion, which once made whole nations fools or madmen.

"When the belief was universal of the immobility of the earth, Copernicus conceived the idea that the sun was the center of the system, and that the earth was a planet, like Mars and Venus, and revolved round the sun. And yet this founder of a new system of astronomy was excommunicated from the Vatican, in 1543, for maintaining heretical doctrines, and the papal court never annulled the sentence till 1821.

"When Galileo, his great follower in the cause of scientific truth, was thrown in the prison of the inquisition, in 1633, and was compelled to solemnly renounce on his knees, in the presence of an assembly of ignorant monks, with his hand upon the Gospel, the glorious truths he had taught, and to declare that the earth stood still, as he arose from his humiliating position, he indignantly exclaimed, stamping his foot, 'And yet it moves.' For this he was again assigned to the dungeons for an indefinite period of time, and required to repeat every week, for three years, the seven penitential psalms of David.

"But the Copernican system is now established, and has thus recommended itself to the scientific world through tribulation. That Tycho, Kepler, the Herschels, and Newton, were permitted to enunciate the result of their labors in peace, may be attributed to other causes, and in spite of the natural and universal perversity to sustain error.

"Galileo and Socrates are examples of the sacrifices men have sometimes made for the advancement of truth, under adverse circumstances, and against the preconceived ideas, prejudices, and superstitions of ignorant ages. Columbus, Fulton, and Franklin, were all opposed, each in his particular path of discovery, by the public sentiment by which they were surrounded, and nothing but their actual and unequalled triumphs saved them the reputation of being fit subjects for an insane asylum.

"How much does the world owe to Leinnitz, Leverrier, Lambert, Michael Angelo, Delambre, Descartes, and Galvani, for their painful and laborious mathematical calculations, composition of forces, and great analysis. Blot their discoveries from existence, and all becomes dark, chaotic, and given to uncertainty.

"It was fashionable twenty years ago to deny that the earth was more than six thousand years old, but the geological researches of Dr. Buckland, Professor Silliman, Dr. John Pye Smith, Mr. Lyell, President Hitchcock, and others, have proven by incontrovertible facts that it must have existed for many hundreds of thousands of years. And yet so far from these investigations leading to atheism, they lead to a true knowledge of nature. Those who contend for the limited existence stand on the very verge of denying indirectly the existence of a divine power, and uproot the whole system of natural theology. The supposition of Chateaubriand, that the earth was erected just as it is, with its millions of fossil-shells imbedded in the rocks, would overturn all the foundations of Dr. Paley's theory, and lead to the roughest skepticism. If the mountains hoary with age do not give evidence of their

volcanic fires for many centuries—if the bones of fishes with their fins were not intended for motion—if the eyes of the fossil insects were not intended—then the most admirable adaptations of the animal economy do not show design or point with unerring certainty to the great Architect and Designer.

"Yet how often do the discoveries of true science pass unrecompensed, while the various systems of stultifying humbuggery meet with favor the eye and ear of the public. William Harvey, who discovered the circulation of the blood, met with detraction and persecution that destroyed his practice and reduced him to poverty, while the inventors of "cough lozenges," "fumex bitters," "liver pills," &c., roll in wealth and dress in purple and fine linen. Before the time of Francis I., in the early part of the sixteenth century, the surgeons stanchd the blood, when a limb was amputated, by the application of boiling pitch to the surface of the stump. Ambrose Bare, the principal surgeon to that king, introduced the ligature. A clamor was raised, and this experienced surgeon was hooted and howled down by the faculty of physic, who ridiculed the idea of "hanging human life upon a thread," when boiling pitch had stood the test for centuries.

"When Paracelsus, of Switzerland, introduced the employment of antimony as a medicine at the instigation of the Medical College, the French parliament voted it a crime, and passed an act making it a penal offence to administer it for any disease.

"The Jesuits introduced into Europe the Peruvian bark, and in England they at once rejected the drug as an invention of the father of lies. Frederick the Great, took it in spite of the remonstrances of his physicians, and was soon restored to health.

"In 1792, Dr. Groerevett discovered the curative power of the Spanish fly in dropsy, but no sooner did his cures begin to be noised abroad than he was at once committed to Newgate, by warrant of the president of the college of physicians, for prescribing cantharides internally.

"Lady Mary Montague, who had spent some time in Turkey, first introduced inoculation for the small-pox into England, as she had witnessed its happy effects during her foreign residence. She tried the experiment upon her own children, and the common people were taught to hoot at her as an unnatural mother, who had risked the lives of her own offspring. The faculty rose in arms, foretelling failure and the most disastrous consequences, and the clergy descanted from their pulpits on the impiety of thus seeking to take events out of the hands of Providence. She protested that in the four or five years after her arrival home, she seldom passed a day without repenting of her patriotic undertaking, and she vowed she never would have attempted it, had she foreseen the vexation and persecution it brought upon her.

"Almost the same fate for a time overtook Dr. Jenner, who discovered the uses of vaccination. The Royal College of Physicians received his discovery with ridicule and contempt. Even religion and the Bible were made engines of attack against him. Erham, of Frankfurt, gravely attempted by quotations from the prophetic parts of the Scriptures and the writings of the fathers of the Church, to prove that vaccination was the real Antichrist.

"Such have been a few of the results of ignorance, prejudice, and intolerance. It is to be hoped that with the common school, the academy, and college, the powers of a free press, the scientific lecture-room, the general dissemination of substantial knowledge, that such a foothold has been obtained against the flood-tides of bigotry, intolerance, and ignorance, that their dark waves will be rolling back upon themselves, no longer to disturb the placid surface of an elevating and ennobling humanity. We hope that with correct knowledge, every day becoming more and more diffused with the invention of useful labor-saving machines, the power of the loom and the anvil, the steam-engine and electric telegraph, the day will soon dawn, that it has already come, when fudge and nonsense will no longer be tolerated, but that man everywhere and on all occasions shall deal in facts, not in fancy, shall state truths and not wild vagaries hatched amid the incu-

bations of dark ages to spread abroad and plague the world. We hope this practical, sensible era has arrived, and we believe that with such views the world will make more progress the next century than it has done in any five centuries heretofore in the struggles of an impeded civilization. Welcome an age of common sense, of correct views, of useful knowledge, the more useful because the more true."

How shall knowledge be made to take the authority of opinion in churches?

Knowledge can be made to supersede opinion, in modern churches, by calling a "convention of creeds" and publishing the results of such a convocation to the world. That is to say, let us have a senate of Christian and of anti-Christian leaders; a full representation of each system. Each creed has some truth in it, some fragment of a principle, which its rival has not.

Who could be excluded from such a Convention?

Hear the Echo! "Who could be excluded from such convention?"

Who denied a seat in this senate? Who could be voted intruders—who, for opinion's sake prohibited?

Who could be ostracized—could Fenelon?

"Could Fenelon?"—with his sovereign conviction that holy works and charity evidence forth the soul's regeneration?

Who could be voted alien—could Luther?

"Could Luther?"—with his doctrine of justification by faith; the inspiring element and conservative principle of character?

Who could be shut out—could St. Augustine?

"Could St. Augustine?"—notwithstanding his dismal idea of the blighted majesty of all human nature?

Who could be repudiated—could Calvin?

"Could Calvin?"—with his logical platitudes concerning foreknowledge, free will, necessity, and the unprogressive, unexpansive, fallen nature of man?

Could any one be passed over—could Channing?

"Could Channing?"—with his belief in man's boundless capabilities and endless growth?

Could a doubter be omitted—could Hume?

"Could Hume?"—with his doctrine of experience as the test of truth?

Could any be voted heretical—could Wesley?

"Could Wesley?"—with his ruling idea of a Missionary work?

Could a friend be prohibited—could George Fox?

"Could George Fox?"—with his doctrine that the unerring spirit of God is a guest of every regenerate bosom?

Could a critic be discountenanced—could Voltaire?

"Could Voltaire?"—with his belief that what men term truth is all ways two thirds fable?

Could any seer be proscribed—could Swedenborg?

"Could Swedenborg?"—with his impression that the outer universe is but the drapery and imagery of a spiritual existence?

Could any liberalist be excluded—could Thomas Paine?

"Could Thomas Paine?"—with his conviction that Reason is the only reliable Revelation, and a sufficient rule of faith and practice?

Could any person be tabooed—could John Murray?

"Could John Murray?"—with his belief in the final holiness and happiness of all mankind, and the restitution of all things?

Could any woman be repulsed—could Ann Lee?

"Could Ann Lee?"—with her doctrine of the difference between the Jewish and Gentile Christian church, of the carnality of outer marriage, and of perpetual inspiration?

Could any professedly honest person be shut out—could Joseph Smith?

"Could Joseph Smith?"—with his doctrine of a new Jerusalem, in the form of a Mormon organization?

Could any leading mind, in America or across the Atlantic, be denied a representation in this senate of creeds?

Echo still responds: "Could any be denied?" Nay; for these leaders, or their followers rather, are unable to form true estimates of each other. Each system, having obtained and bodied forth some truth

and knowing little or nothing of its neighbor, arrogates infallibility for its declarations. Opinion becomes law. Each sets desperately and spitefully upon the other. Instead of rejoicing and being happy in each other's earnestness and eloquence and efforts for man, and playing fraternally into each other's hands, the sects stoutly refuse hospitality and acquaintance, and strive to force one creed upon all mankind as the sum of truth in religion. They separate themselves into bigoted organizations—exhibiting folly and wickedness, passion and imbecility—and thus defeat the good which the best believers have in view.

What may be said of priests and churches?

Priests and churches, without knowing it, have deserted the path of truth. The dignity of an everlasting principle has been given to opinions; and the dismal opinions of theology tend to debase the mind, and plunge men into despondency.

Is priestly influence against human unity?

Yes; priests have separated themselves from others, in humbler social positions; and have made men suspicious of each other.

What is the theology of priests?

Their theology is a compound of love and hate, of heaven and hell, of rewards and punishments; and its teachers, all unconscious to themselves, breathe the spirit of hate and human differences, even while their theme is "love." Thus they divide men, and sacrifice the interests of individuals upon the blood-stained altars of sects and priesthoods. They are no friends to free thought, to free speech, to free action.—They fear the human heart; they would vilify and set bounds to its God-ordained attractions. Opinion teaches the corruptions of reason; and the treacherousness of its best dictations. Opinion teaches the superiority of past traditions to present truths. And priests would have Geology retain her secrets, and Astronomy withhold her starlight, rather than see discredit thrown upon modern creeds which rest upon ancient chronicles.

Suppose we leave creeds and churches, what shall we do?

We are free to communicate with the divine revelations of our Mother-Nature. Her sweet melodious voices are ever-cheering; her revelations ever-welcome to her children. She invites them to worship in the cathedral of immensity. Her ministers are the expanded earth, the unfolded heavens, the stars above, the spheres that swell out into the depths beyond, and all the myriad hosts who live and love upon them. The unalterable universe, both positive and negative—material and spiritual, is your Sacred Book! This is the word of Father-God—containing his promises, his purposes, his principles—superior to steam-presses, to the despotism of Opinion! A proper study of its pages, so beautifully embellished by angel-hands, expands the genius of wisdom—making men active, courageous, harmonious, Beautiful. It tells man to be honest and sociable, to be reasonable and peaceable, to be just and fear not. The immutable Laws of this Book are our rules of life; and perfect obedience to them is our virtue and our religion.

What position do we now occupy, as practical denizens of the globe?

We occupy a transition place; our feet press the planks of that temporary bridge which connects the past with the future; midway between the inferior and the better era; with much of both, with neither practically. While the sun of pure wisdom, just rising over the brow of the Better Day, sheddeth its delightful rays upon the topmost minds on earth, the darkness of popular Theology—seen by them to be a despotic opinion without knowledge—appeareth all the more hideous and repugnant. The valleys of human life—the archives and alcoves of existing Doctrines—appear more and yet more uncongenial; a repugnance which increaseth sevenfold, as we continue to ascend the Alpine heights of the pure impersonal Reason. The light of the future maketh the night of the past darker; while our opponents, the comfortably-housed and the mythic-valley people, see nothing of this and have no such realizations. Gladly, we turn our steps from darkness—gladly, we look forward—away, up the hill to the City of the living God! The Past? that has worshipped imaginary beings; the Future? that will work for HUMANITY!

For the Age of Progress.

LONDON, Sept. 14th, 1856.

Mr. Editor: I am desirous of laying before the readers of your interesting sheet, an account of some startling demonstrations which have lately transpired in our city. The Davenports have come among us, by the solicitation of a number of our most respectable citizens. I have attended all of the circles they have holden in this city, and have witnessed some of the most powerful and astounding demonstrations that has ever occurred in my presence, and far exceeding anything I ever heard of, and in the presence of some of the most inharmonious circles that ever collected together. The room in which they held circles, is about thirty-five feet by twenty-five. In the center stands a moderate sized table, on which lay guitars, two tin horns, a bell, tamborine, violin and bow. The mediums who sit at the table are secured in their chairs with ropes by the most skeptical persons present. The company are seated around the room, and a cord passed through the buttonhole of each man's coat, rendering it impossible for the mediums or company to produce any demonstration. After a few remarks by Mr. Davenport, the lights are blown out; soon the instruments begin to play around the room, with astonishing velocity, occasionally touching the heads of different persons; then whirling with inconceivable velocity, first striking the ceiling, then the floor, with such violence as it would seem to shatter the instrument to atoms, and creating such a strong current of air, as to be felt by all present. The tunes on the violin were beyond the power of the most expert violinist to equal. The amazing rapidity with which they handled the bow would convince any reasonable skeptic that it far exceeded the power of mortal man. After various other demonstrations, the spirit of John B. King called for the light. The committee who tied the mediums said that they were satisfied that they were in the same position, and could not participate in the manifestations. It was then proposed that a committee of three skeptical persons be appointed to tie the boys, in any position they pleased, and all retire from the room except the mediums, and see if they could be untied, the proposition agreed upon, the mediums were secured by ropes, and all being satisfied that it was utterly impossible for them to free themselves, the room was examined, the company all retired from the room, locking the door after them. In about five minutes the mediums were untied.

The next evening some of the most severe tests were given by the spirits. One individual present, who must have been as skeptical as Thomas of old, insinuated that he would not believe, though the spirits should take him through the wall. Yet he said, if he could tie the mediums, and have manifestations produced, he would be perfectly satisfied. He procured some four yards of factory cloth, and about fifty yards of rope; he then wrapped the hands of each medium tightly within the cloth, he then twisted around the arms from the hand to the shoulder, tying the ends of the ropes to their chairs behind them, then tying the hands and feet securely to the table, so that it was impossible for them to move one inch. He then told the company that he was satisfied that it was impossible for the boys to produce the slightest demonstration. The company was then secured as before mentioned. As soon as the lights were extinguished, the bell was rang, the guitar carried around the room, and the tamborine was beaten upon the head of one of the boys. After various other demonstrations, the light was called for by the spirits. The boys were examined, and found in the same positions. The gentleman required another test to satisfy his incredulous mind. He placed the instruments under the table, and desired them to be put upon the table. The lights were extinguished; the guitar was raised gently from the floor, placed upon the table, and the light called for. The boys were again examined and found in their same position. But the man declared he would not acknowledge himself convinced, though he should be carried through the wall. One person present offered to forfeit four hundred dollars, if he could be allowed to put the boys in sacks. Mr. Davenport and mediums accepted the offer; but the man shuffled and withdrew his

proposition, and the mediums have been subjected to the most severe tests that human ingenuity could invent, and have been successful in every instance. Most of the persons that visited Mr. Davenport's rooms, have become converts to Spiritualism by the unmistakable evidence given by those spirits, through those mediums.

JOHN D. LEE.

A Peep into a Living Man's Stomach.

The case of Alexis St. Martin, who, at the age of eighteen, while in the service of the American Fur Company, was accidentally wounded by the discharge of a musket loaded with buck shot, is attracting considerable attention among the medical men of this country. The charge with which he was wounded, entered laterally from behind passed quite through his body, tearing off the muscles, carrying away half of the sixth rib, lacerating the left lobe of the lungs at the diaphragm, perforating the stomach, and exposing to view the pericardium, or covering of the heart. A portion of the lung, as large as a turkey's egg, was lacerated and burnt; and just below this, a portion of the stomach protruded from the wound, the food at the same time passing from the orifice thus made in the stomach. This orifice has never healed, and through it the process of digestion can be plainly seen in the stomach. He is now under the care of Dr. John Bunting, formerly a surgeon in the British army, who exhibited him recently before the Hartford Medical Society, for the purpose of affording the members an opportunity of noting the progressions and the effects of digestion, the absorption of the different kinds of food, &c., an account of which we copy from the *Hartford Times*:

"Some of the facts thus obtained are new and interesting; others seem to confirm previous theories of the physicians.

It was found that brandy, taken upon an empty stomach, half an hour before dinner, has the effect to temporarily paralyze the digestive powers, and to retard very effectually the progress of digestion for four hours. Moreover, its influence upon the stomach, under the circumstances, is such as to prevent the organ from recovering its natural healthy tone for thirty-six hours after the brandy had been swallowed; when, at the expiration of that time, its restoration to a healthy tone is indicated by the appearance of red patches on the internal coats of the stomach, from which minute drops of blood exude—this is the result noted after a debauch. Curiously enough, appetite is not in the least impaired, although the functions of digestion are greatly impeded. The immediate effects of the brandy is to induce upon the coats of the stomach a condition either of inflammation or "digestion"—the physicians were unable to agree, from the appearances, which of the two conditions really existed in this case. If, however, the brandy be taken with the dinner, or after it, the food prevents its direct contact with the coats of the stomach, and the result then is to facilitate the process of digestion, and has been frequently proved by observation, which show that food under these circumstances digests considerably quicker than it does without the stimulus. This, however, does not prove that brandy is beneficial as a regular concomitant of the dinner table. It may well be questioned if it is the part of wisdom to make such regular and unceasing application of the whip and spur to a horse that is disposed to do his best without this sharp stimulus; though there may be cases of weak stomachs where the very moderate use of pure brandy might prove advantageous. But the physicians who have watched the process going on in St. Martin's stomach, do not propose to deal in theories; they are after bold, literal facts.

Another interesting discovery has been made by observation of this man's stomach. In looking into the aperture left by the shot from the gun, the secretion of the gastric juice has been distinctly seen. The theory of the existence of this curious digestive agent, has been held by the faculty, and was so strongly sustained by reason and by circumstantial evidence, that it was regarded less as a theory than an ascertained fact. It was not, however, until the case of St. Martin's occurred,

that the doctors were enabled to know from the positive evidence of their senses, that the so-called "gastric juice" was precisely what it was.

It was never before actually seen, as it is never produced except as food, taken into the stomach, requires its presence to perform the work of digestion; and then it is produced in exactly the quantity requisite for the work to be done. Thus, if a small amount of food is eaten, the juice is less. It exudes from the coats of the stomach, as sweat from the surface of the body, and is of a limpid clearness, like water. It could be seen trickling down the inner coating of the stomach, and has, it is said, a slightly sweetish taste. In post mortem examinations, this singular agent was never seen before this hole in the living man's stomach exposed it to the curious eye of the investigator.

Anger has the effect to cause the bile to rush into the stomach in a stream. This has been observed with certainty in the case of St. Martin. When he had been suddenly enraged, while lying upon a table, the bile had been seen to rush into the stomach, which was perfectly clear of it the instant before, and in such quantity as to admit of its being emptied out into a cup! simply by turning him over.

Hundreds of people have an idea that game and meat that have been kept until it has almost reached the verge of putrefaction, is more easily digested than fresh game or fresh beef. This belief led to the cultivation of that taste that likes, or professes to like, what is called the game flavor in woodcock, venison, &c. But it is seen in this case that tainted meat or game requires a longer time for digestion than fresh meats. By a curious process in the stomach, the tainted meat is seen to undergo a very effective cleansing, before the work of digestion begins. It is rolled over and over, and passed from one portion of the stomach to the other, the subtle agencies of that interior laboratory all the while acting upon it, and eliminating, particle by particle, the offensive portions, until all is clean and ready for the proper work of digestion to commence.

Cooked—melted, or "drawn" butter and lard, used in shortening pie-crust, is not digested at all. It is seen swimming on the surface of the contents of the stomach, in the form of yellow or light colored grease, and is finally passed off undigested. The skins of all fruits, and especially raisins, never digest; neither do the stones or pits of plums, cherries, &c. The vanilla seasoning of ice creams is found to act as an irritating substance upon the stomach, and it greatly retards digestion. In both of these respects, also, the coloring matter of candies is seen to be still worse. These facts are settled by simply looking into the stomach with the naked eye, and viewing all the processes or stages through which different articles of food must pass in the act of digestion.

HOT BREAD never digests! Bear this in mind, reader, if you are accustomed to eat the warm and tempting biscuit at "tea," or the warm loaf that looks so appetizing upon your dinner table. Hot bread never digests at all; it will, after a long season of rumbling and working about in the stomach, begin to ferment, and it will eventually be passed out of the stomach, as an unwelcome guest of that delicate organ; but it never digests—never becomes assimilated to or absorbed by the organs that appropriate nutrition to the body. It is, however, a first rate dyspepsia producer.

Chopped meat, moistened, introduced through this bullet-hole into the man's stomach, is found to nourish him just as it would if taken at the mouth! All that the patient requires in that case, is to be allowed to chew a piece of gum, (merely to satisfy the habit of chewing, we suppose) and he gets along as well as if he had his dinner; it is undoubtedly better, however, that the food should first be masticated, and this can only be done through the proper agencies appointed for that purpose by nature.

Venison digests in an hour; cooked oysters in two hours and a half; raw oysters (contrary to our previous impression) three hours and a half; beef steak, two hours and a half; fat pork, four hours; lean pork, a little more than three hours. Probably this rule would not apply to all persons; different articles of food are digested differently in different

stomachs; but the general principle here illustrated undoubtedly holds good in the great majority of cases.

CALOMEL, taken into a healthy stomach, according to Dr. Bunting's experiments, is found to irritate it; if given in case of disease, it does not have that effect.

MIRTHFULNESS, at and after a meal, facilitates digestion. Take St. Martin to a theatre, for instance, after a hearty evening meal, and let him enjoy a good comedy—the result is astonishing; digestion is promoted to an astonishing degree. "Laugh and grow fat," is an adage now seen to be founded upon a physiological truth.

But make this man suddenly angry, under the above circumstances, and presto! what a change! The whole process of digestion is at once arrested—brought to a sudden stop, as if by the stroke of an electric shock! and it does not again go on as well as before, until a considerable time after the emotion which caused the interruption has died away.

Water is the first thing taken up and absorbed by the stomach, and this must be done before food is acted upon, even if the water be taken subsequent to the food. Eating and drinking freely, alternately, at meals, as a habit, is not sanctioned by the revelations made through the bullet hole in St. Martin's stomach. Another bad practice, is the habit of eating between meals, and at all hours. This custom, according to the disclosure here made, is a most pernicious one. Regularity, above all other things, is to be observed, both in the quantity of food and the time of eating it.

Black pepper is much worse for the stomach than red or Cayenne pepper; it inflames the casings of the stomach.

A piece of meat tied to a string, has been introduced into the stomach through this orifice, and after the lapse of a certain time, it has been pulled out again, and the process of digestion accurately noted.—In this way, corned beef, for instance, has been reduced to a mass of fine, delicate and even threads, after having been for some time subjected to the action of gastric juice. Another queer disclosure is the action of the stomach in case of hunger, when the whole sack or bag known as the stomach, is seen to roll "work" about. If kept too long in this empty and restless condition, the action of the organ is weakened—the stomach loses a portion of its vital energy, and the digestion of food taken at that time is performed more slowly in consequence. The stomach evidently requires rest, like the body.

Another fact that we noted while watching the case of St. Martin, may prove to be of some benefit to invalids, if not to persons in robust health. The time required to digest different kinds of food varies with the character of the food. Thus, the flesh of an old hen is more readily assimilated and more quickly disposed of, than that of a tender chicken!—and the same thing is true in regard to beef. The meat of a full grown ox or cow digest easier than veal.

*By what light?

TAKE NOTICE.

WILLIAM BLANCHARD, of Lockport, in this State, is our authorized agent, to receive subscriptions, collect arrearages, and give receipts in the name of our firm.

This notice, we regret to say, has been, inadvertently, left out of our columns for some weeks.

MURRAY & BAKER.

TAKE NOTICE.

That we, the proprietors of this paper, have appointed **S. J. FINNEY, Esq.**, our agent, to receive subscriptions and subscription fees, and to use the name of our firm in receipting the same.

MURRAY & BAKER.

SEWERS! SEWERS!!

THE public are respectfully informed that the subscriber is prepared to construct sewers at the shortest notice and on reasonable terms. A line addressed to him through the post office—box 2409—will meet with immediate attention. Ap. 5. 1876

A. WEBSTER.